

Scouting AT HOME Badgework



SCOUTS  **Outdoors Challenge**



Safe use of a hand axe

You will need...

- A pen or pencil
- A ruler or straight edge
- A print of the drawing on page 3



Things to think about

An axe is an essential tool for preparing firewood around camp; so it is vital to know how to take care of it and how to use it safely and correctly, as it can be difficult and dangerous to handle if it is too big for you to control effectively. So, make sure that you use one that is the right size and weight that is suited to the job and your level of ability.

Carrying and passing an axe ...



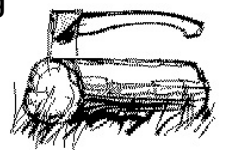
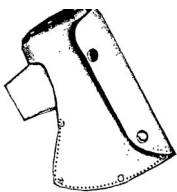
The bit should be facing forwards and turned inwards with the haft under the arm. Any companion should be on the other side of you, away from the axe.

When passing the axe to another person hold it by the haft and support the head in your free hand. Pass the axe head first.



Good practice ...

- When it is not in use, the head of the axe must have a securely fitting mask or sheath. The axe can be masked temporarily in the chopping block, but make sure that the blade is securely wedged in the grain of the wood and that the shaft does not pose a trip hazard. Do not plant the head in the ground.



Continued on the next page .



Fairly
clean



Not too
messy



Quite
messy



Highly
messy

Original source:

- Scouting October 1981
- Author - Alan Thorp
- © Scouter Bill @ Wedmore

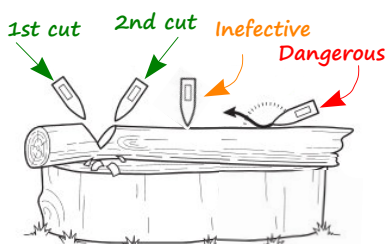
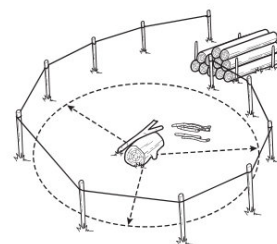


Good practice (continued) ...

- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear, avoiding scarves, or any loose items that could be snared. Boots should be worn rather than trainers. Tie long hair back.
- Before starting work, check the axe for damage and that its head is on firmly. Never use a blunt axe as it may bounce on impact or slip off the wood that it is hitting.
- Don't use an axe when you are tired; as this may lead to an accident happening.
- Keep axes dry, and never leave them out overnight.
- Maintain the axe by sharpening it regularly, ideally after use and before putting it in storage.

Using an axe safely ...

- Clear the ground before you start, and mark out a chopping area. This should be near to the fire area but separated from it by a woodpile. This area must be free of obstructions such as overhanging branches and trip hazards; and at least three axe lengths in radius (i.e. an outstretched arm and the length of three axes). Place the chopping block in the centre.
- Axes should only be used in this area, which should be enforced as a 'no go' zone for anyone who is not properly trained or clothed, or just watching.
- Stand square or kneel on the ground behind the chopping block and hold the wood to be chopped in one hand, and firmly grip the haft of the axe with the other. Never chop into the ground as the axe may hit a stone and dull the bit.
- Aim carefully and cut away from your body, while always trying to hit the wood in the same place. When practising, it may help to make a chalk mark on the log.
- Swing the axe in a chopping motion by bending your arm at the elbow, aiming to create a small 'V' with alternate angled cuts at 45 degrees. Do not chop straight down onto the wood, as this will cause the axe head to bounce.



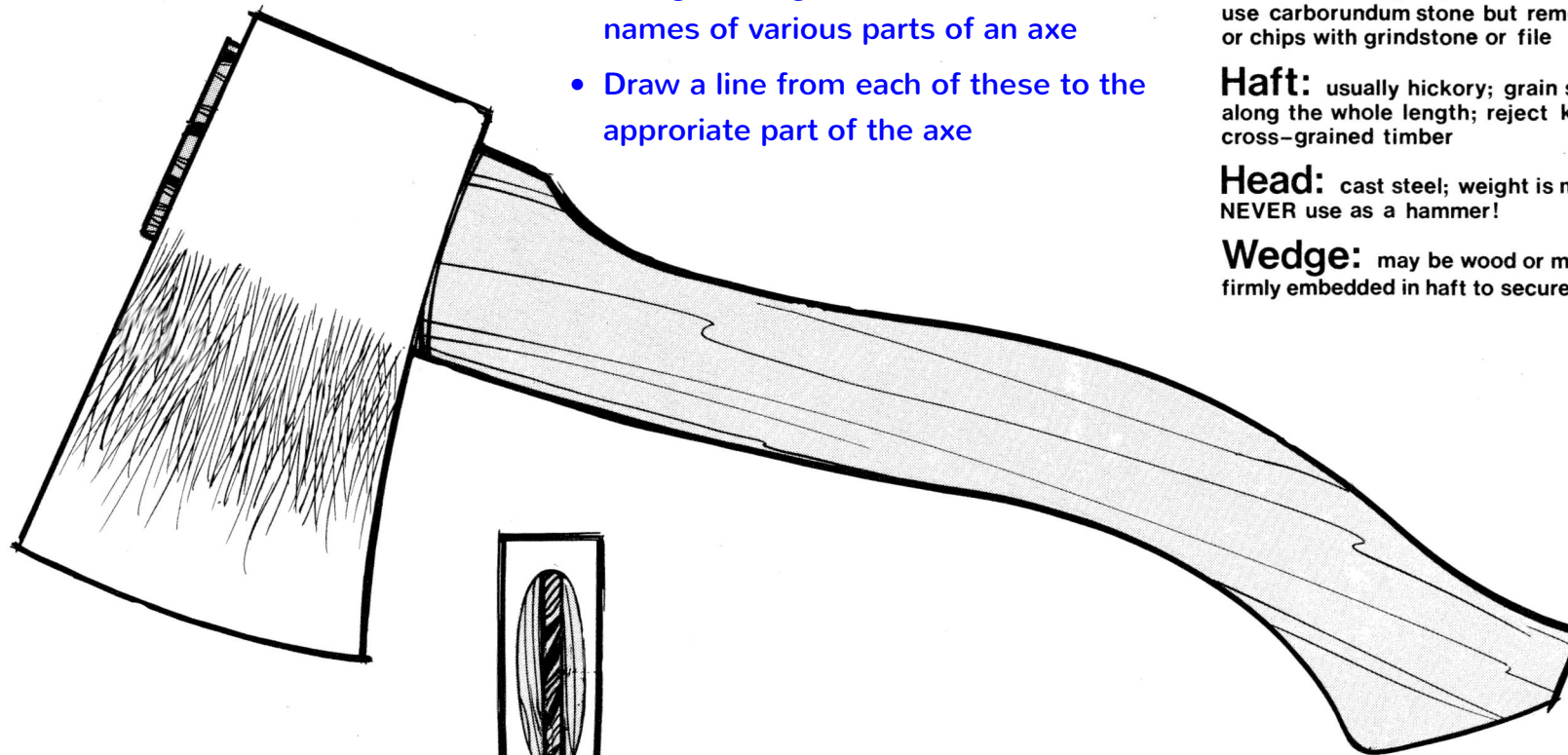
- As the 'V' widens, you will create chippings, and the wood will soon split. Clear the chippings away regularly and use them for kindling.
- Never throw the axe on the ground; don't leave it lying on, or sticking into, the ground.

Handaxe



Get to know the parts of a axe

- Along the edge of the sheet are the names of various parts of an axe
- Draw a line from each of these to the appropriate part of the axe



Bit: or cutting edge must be kept sharp; use carborundum stone but remove bad dents or chips with grindstone or file

Haft: usually hickory; grain should run true along the whole length; reject knot holes or cross-grained timber

Head: cast steel; weight is marked in pounds; NEVER use as a hammer!

Wedge: may be wood or metal; must be firmly embedded in haft to secure head

- Back
- Bit
- Cheek
- Eye
- Grip
- Haft
- Head
- Heel
- Neck
- Shoulder
- Toe
- Wedge

Before Use

Sharpen with carborundum stone; check wedge is secure; check no movement of head on haft; check haft for splinters and other damage

Before Storage

As above, then smear head with Vaseline or similar and mask; occasionally treat haft with linseed oil

Correct Sharpening Angle

